THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI VIJAY GOEL) : (a) As on 31st March 2002, Rs. 1336.24 crores was outstanding as PF arrears.

(b) The Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund is considering an Amnesty Scheme.

(c) The field offices of EPFO have been instructed to monitor the cases for early disposal.

Court cases against defaulter Companies

†5071. SHRI MOTILAL VORA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases filed in various courts against the various companies for not depositing the amount of contribution of provident fund;

(b) the steps Government have taken for the speedy disposal of all the pending cases and the results thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when the requisite arrangement are likely to be made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI VIJAY GOEL) : (a) There are 52022 cases pending before various courts as on 31-12-2002.

(b) to (d) The field offices of EPFO have been instructed to monitor the cases for early disposal.

Abolition of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

5072. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there are any proposals with Government to abolish the Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented in various States;

(b) whether there are also proposals to allot the funds to the States as they are better equipped to meet the local needs; and

(c) if so, by when it would be given effect to?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) No Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Special category status to states

†5073. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA :

SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that some States have been placed in the special category with a view to provide financial assistance;

(b) if so, the reasons for non-inclusion of Rajasthan therein, while it has been affected by natural calamities; and

(c) whether Government propose to include it in the special category for providing financial assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE) : (a) Eleven States have been categorised as special category States for the purpose of allocating Central Assistance for State Plan. They are : Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttaranchal.

(b) Special category State status has been accorded to those States which generally fulfil the following criteria: (i) hilly and difficult terrain, (ii) low population density and/or sizeable share of tribal population, (iii) strategic location along borders with neighboring countries, (iv) weak resources base, and (v) overall economic and infrastructural backwardness. Most of these States have been formed from small Union Territories or districts of some other States Occurrence of natural calamities in a State is not a part of the existing criteria of according special category status.

(c) There is no proposal before Government for including Rajasthan in the list of special category States.

+ Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.